

stopped in Annapolis. This was on November 21, 1782. Annapolitans greeted the conquering hero with a salute of cannon, the acclamation of citizens and an official reception by the Governor and the members of the General Assembly. Here is an eyewitness account as reported in the *Maryland Gazette*, a newspaper which is still being printed in Annapolis and which is reputed to be the oldest in the country. The *Gazette* wrote:

“When the citizens received the pleasing intimation of his excellency’s intentions to honor them with his presence, all business ceased and every consideration gave way to their impatience to behold their benefactor and the deliverer of his country. On his appearance in the streets, people of every rank and every age pressed forward eagerly to feed their eyes with gazing on the man to whom, under Providence, and the aid of our great and good ally, they owed their present security and their hopes of future liberty and peace. The courteous affability with which he returned their salutes lighted up ineffable joy in every countenance and diffused the most animated gratitude through every breast.”

The newspaper, in the somewhat ornate journalistic style of the day, went on to describe a public dinner next day, followed by an assembly where the ladies were present. “His excellency,” the *Gazette* wrote, “to gratify the wishes of the fair, crowned the entertainment with his presence, and with graceful dignity and familiar ease so framed his looks, his gestures and his words that every heart o’erflowed with gratitudes and love, and every tongue grew wanton in his praise.” This, then, was Washington, triumphant and relaxed in victory. And, making allowances for the rather exuberant journalism, this is a picture of the living Washington and the feeling his presence inspired in the hearts of his neighbors in Maryland.

But perhaps the most memorable of all the visits to Annapolis came the following winter—on December 23, 1783. At high noon on that day, Washington appeared before the Continental Congress to resign his commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. The setting for this awesome occasion was the Senate chamber of the Maryland State House—a chamber which we in Maryland have set aside as a shrine in the building which still houses the executive and legislative branches of our State government. From a paper which he held in trembling hands, Washington his voice agitated, said:

“Having now finished the work assigned to me, I retire from the great theater of action, and bidding an affectionate farewell to this